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Wiretap Expert

Reports the 'Bugging' of Congressional Lines

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, Mass., Sept. 21.—A wiretap expert said today that he believed Congressional telephone lines had been monitored, possibly by a Government agency.

The testimony was given by Bernard B. Spindel of Holmes, N. Y., at a hearing before a special Massachusetts legislative commission studying wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping.

Mr. Spindel, who described himself as a security consultant involved mainly in protecting clients from wiretapping, said there were major telephone cables in Washington to the White House, the Pentagon and the Congressional offices on Capitol Hill.

He said he knew of a branch line that led from the Congressional cable to "an old building." The building, it was later

learned, is the Standard Oil Building at 261 Constitution Avenue, which is three blocks from the Capitol.

'Under Special Lock'

"One of the tenants of the top floor of this building was a Justice Department agency," he testified. "The branch line terminated there and was kept under special lock and key."

"This line laid open every Congressman on Capitol Hill to the possibility of listening devices. Maybe it was the C. I. A., maybe it was the F. B. I., maybe some other organization listening in."

"Information was given to me by persons working in that building that many Government officials were working at the terminal box for the special line. I was given information that wires were crossed with Pentagon lines and other highly important lines."

This branch line was at one time used for monitoring."

Mr. Spindel, who was fined \$500 last April for installing listening devices in a Springfield knitting mill, said he had learned of the branch line "about a year ago." He said a Government official had questioned the telephone company about it "earlier this year."

"Nothing more ever came of it all," he said. "It was all hushed up and covered over."

Mr. Spindel also told the commission that a reporter had begun an investigation but "for some mysterious reason" was suddenly called off the case."

The newsmen, Ronald Kessler of The Boston Herald, had done earlier articles on the monitoring practices of the telephone company in Boston.

2 Trips to Washington

An official of the newspaper said that Mr. Kessler had made

two trips to Washington last summer after having been told of the purported branch line by Mr. Spindel.

The official said the matter was still "under investigation" but that there had been "too many loose ends" to justify going ahead with the article.

Mr. Kessler said he had agreed with this evaluation. However, he said a telephone company representative had confirmed the existence of a branch cable.

Mr. Spindel said he believed that even the White House telephone cable "is not secure." Although the cable is protected with special antwiretapping devices, he said, a person "with the technological know-how" can "pierce" the line.

The 43-year-old witness, who said he tapped his first telephone line when he was 12, disclosed that he had worked in military and civilian eavesdropping for 25 years, specializing in the research, development and detection of secret monitoring devices.

In an interview earlier, he said he had a \$30,000 electronics laboratory at his home in up-state New York, employed a full-time electronics engineer and owned electronics equipment valued at \$200,000. He is writing a book that he expects to be published in December.